

# Governor Markell and College Board Partner to Increase College Access for Delawareans

*Effort supported by Delaware Colleges and Universities, as well as all Ivy League Institutions*

**Wilmington, DE** – Joined by students in Mount Pleasant High School's library today, Governor Markell, Secretary of Education Mark Murphy and [College Board](#) President David Coleman announced a partnership that will enhance the Administration's work to ensure high school students statewide are best equipped for the college application process.

Beginning this month, the College Board is sending resources to students who have demonstrated the potential to succeed in college, but who may be at risk of either discounting the best schools for which they may qualify or of not applying to college at all. In addition to the support from the state's colleges and universities, Delaware's effort is backed by a group made up of all of the Ivy League schools, MIT and Stanford. That group was represented at today's event by Yale University's Dean of Admissions, Jeremiah Quinlan.

"We know the increasing importance of education and training beyond high school to succeed in today's economy," said Markell. "Our education system must prepare students with the skills most valued by colleges and employers, while also ensuring they have access to education opportunities after high school graduation. Too many students are turned off to a college because they don't know about all of the available financial assistance or they underestimate their qualifications. Our partnership with the College Board is a

significant step toward solving these challenges.”

The project grew out of research by Stanford Professor Caroline Hoxby, who discovered that relatively few high-achieving, low-income students attend highly-selective universities. She found that these students are often unaware of available financial aid and are unlikely to have had a mentor who attended a selective university, leaving them without positive examples. The College Board is working on ways to reach out to this group of students nationwide and encourage them to apply to a range of schools.

The Delaware-College Board partnership will specifically reach this group. Those students will receive college application fee waivers, detailed information about affording college and a letter from all of the Ivy Leagues institutions, Stanford and MIT encouraging them to apply to top schools.

Delaware has expanded the project to reach a broader set of students to help them recognize all of their options. In addition to the high-achieving, low-income group, more than 2,000 other seniors will receive materials tailored to their needs, including information about how to research colleges, details of Delaware scholarship programs and a letter of encouragement from Delaware’s colleges and universities. All students who qualify will receive application fee waivers. These waivers already are available to low-income students, but these students often either are unaware of the waivers or struggle with the complex process for requesting them.

“The College Board is delighted to partner with Delaware on this critical effort to expand access to opportunity for students,” said Coleman. “The Delaware partnership is at the forefront of the College Board’s efforts to ensure that students across the country pursue the opportunities they have earned.”

In reporting on the Stanford research, the [New York Times](#)

noted the consequences of economically disadvantaged students not taking advantage of potential education opportunities: “The colleges that most low-income students attend have fewer resources and lower graduation rates than selective colleges, and many students who attend a local college do not graduate. Those who do graduate can miss out on the career opportunities that top colleges offer.”

At today’s announcement, Murphy stressed that the Delaware-College Board partnership would be a key addition to the state’s robust plan to improve college access.

“Our department’s vision is to ensure all students graduate college and career ready, and we are working toward that goal by addressing four key areas: affordability, academic readiness and persistence through college, alliances across K-12 and our post-secondary system and connecting highly qualified students with top schools,” Murphy said. “This project touches on all of those areas.”

### **Delaware Efforts to Assist with College Access and the Application Process**

- Through the College Access Challenge Grant, the state has been working to increase the number of students in dual enrollment courses, giving them a college-going experience and college credits while in high school.
- Race to the Top funding has supported graduation coaches, who are assigned to students to ensure they remain on track and pursue the path that best suits them.
- Through the School Improvement Grant process, districts

have split high schools into multiple schools that focus on specific career interests, such as business, arts and STEM.

- Through 'Summer Nudge'—a partnership between the Delaware Department of Education, the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University and the College Board—the state is actively reaching out to students identified as ready for college who have not enrolled, with the intent of providing support and resources to facilitate their transition to college.
- This year, the state will expand last year's pilot of College Application Week to a College Application Month, offering this program in 19 high schools across the state.

The state is working with U.S. Department of Education and state Office of Volunteerism to support and expand FAFSA nights, which provide chances for families to get information about and support for filling out the federal student financial aid form